

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA SUBCOMMITTEE**  
**RIO NUEVO/DOWNTOWN, ARTS, CULTURE AND HISTORY**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION REPORT AND SUMMARY**  
July 12, 2007

Council Member Trasoff called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. in the Mayor & Council Chambers of City Hall, 255 W. Alameda, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Tucson, Arizona.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:** Nina Trasoff, Subcommittee Chair, Ward 6  
Council Member Jose Ibarra, Ward 1

**COUNCIL MEMBER ABSENT/EXCUSED:** Steve Leal, Ward 5

**STAFF LIAISON PRESENT:** Albert Elias, Director of Urban Planning & Design

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<p><b>1. Call to Order</b></p> <p><b>Chair Trasoff called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.</b></p>	
<p><b>3. Downtown Tucson Partnership</b></p> <p><b>Rick Myers presented an updated on the partnership. No action was taken.</b></p> <p><i>Mr. Myers said the Board had their first meeting today. The partnership's goal is to get the private-sector more involved in downtown's revitalization than they have in the past. This group gets the right people to the table to make that happen. He said the group combines people from the Southern Arizona Leadership Council, Tucson Chamber of Commerce, TREO, Downtown Stakeholders group, Tucson Downtown Alliance and Downtown Development Corporation to form an organization that can make a difference and put deals together. The Board also represents the arts, neighborhoods and downtown property and business owners. It includes suburban developers and businesses that haven't traditionally been involved downtown. Mike Hein, Chuck Huckelberry, Council Member Trasoff, Supervisor Elias are also on the Board.</i></p> <p><i>Mr. Myers said the partnership has 5 councils: Neighborhoods &amp; Residents, Merchants &amp; Retail, Office &amp; Employers, Property Owners and Arts, Culture &amp; History. The group is diverse, inclusive and meetings will be open to the public. He complimented Roger Karber, Ron Schwabe and Don Durband for all their work. Jim Kiser studied what happened in San Diego and Chattanooga. One board member, John Humenik, the publisher of the Arizona Daily Star was very involved with DavenportOne, the downtown redevelopment group in Davenport, Iowa, which made tremendous progress with their public-private partnership group.</i></p>	

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<p><i>He said they didn't create the group on their own. They looked at best practices and other communities like Phoenix and Albuquerque. Margaret Mullen, the "Downtown Diva", founded the Downtown Phoenix Partnership about 15 years ago was invited to speak to them. Then they took the best from all the cities, looked at the uniqueness of Tucson, and structured something that would work in this community. The group will adjust as needed to make it successful.</i></p> <p><i>Council Member Trasoff commented that \$550 million isn't a lot of money when you start to look at all the projects and the goal is to leverage private sector money.</i></p> <p><i>Mr. Myers said there are a lot of projects planned especially those funded by TIF, and he doesn't want it to sound like there isn't a lot of progress being made. They just think that by pulling all these people together they can accelerate things and get things done quicker.</i></p>	
<p><b>2. Call to the Audience</b></p> <p><i>Jack Strosford asked for a plan to be in July 31<sup>st</sup> to relocate the Steinfeld artists into a temporary space with reasonable rent. Give them "first right of refusal" to move back into the building at a reasonable and affordable rate. Contribute money to make improvements to the building to get a Certificate of Occupancy for the building. He said Michael Keith's report indicated that infrastructure doesn't just include utilities and transportation, but also includes capital investments to support a successful environment. He also supports Council Member Leal's idea to put a \$1 million aside for the project, although he thinks that's a low estimate.</i></p> <p><i>Michael Toney spoke about the I-10 widening, TIF funding, TCC remodeling, Proposition 400, bonding, the arena and the hotel.</i></p> <p><i>Rick Luyties, President of the El Presidio Neighborhood Association spoke about the Tucson Museum of Art's expansion plan. The neighborhood is encouraged by the initial drawings. They like the idea of connecting their neighborhood's southern border to the rest of downtown via El Presidio Park crossing Alameda. However, they would like the planners to look at the impact of increased traffic and how the amphitheater sound would impact the neighborhood.</i></p> <p><i>Don Durband from the Tucson Downtown Partnership said the Tucson Museum of Art's idea to put their western collection into the 1929 Pima County Court House is exciting. The courthouse is an icon for Tucson just</i></p>	

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<p><i>like San Xavier Mission and Old Main. It would make it a visitor's attraction rather than just another government office building. He said the museum has been forgotten as Rio Nuevo focuses on new projects for downtown. He asked the City to support the proposal.</i></p>	
<p><b>4. Tucson Museum of Art</b></p> <p><b>Robert Knight, Tucson Museum of Art (TMA) Director and Andy Anderson, TMA Board President presented the El Presidio Cultural Plaza conceptual design master plan. The subcommittee asked them to meet with City staff and return in October with a more specific request. If TMA is ready in September, then they can come back sooner</b></p> <p><i>Mr. Knight said that 20 years ago an outside consultant determined that the museum's biggest challenges were parking and direction signage. Those challenges remain today. The museum has been around for 83 years or 12 years after Statehood. It has 26 galleries, five historic houses, a café, a fine arts library and an art school. Last year they created a partnership with the Tucson-Pima Arts Council, Tucson Unified School District and ArtsWorks Academy. They are fully accredited by the American Association of Museums, and noted that 5% of museums, zoological and botanical gardens are accredited. They have an annual budget of \$3.3 million and 30 FTEs. Their fine arts collection includes over 8,000 objects. They are a corporate 501(c)3 non-profit organization. They've been in the black for 18 years and are very careful on how they use their resources and hope that they use them to the benefit of the community. Then a short video on the museum and historic block was shown. Mr. Knight referred to the museum as a buried treasure in the downtown historic district and this is an opportunity to unbury it.</i></p> <p><i>Board President Andy Anderson presented the El Presidio Plaza Conceptual Master Plan. The museum needs new space. If they can't obtain space at the courthouse, they'll need to find a way to expand on the campus. They've talked to Pima County about acquiring 1/3 of the Pima County Court House to be the home of their western collection. Their master plan would connect the rest of downtown to the arts district. It would go from Congress Street and the Fox Theatre across the Library plaza through the Pima County Court House, to the El Presidio Plaza and TMA. The plaza could hold cultural events where people from the community could gather. Across from the museum complex on the east they would expand with a community auditorium, arts school, restaurant, retail stores and art storage. Ultimately they would expand the Plaza of the Pioneers (just north</i></p>	<p><u>RIO NUEVO &amp; URBAN PLANNING AND DESIGN DIRECTORS</u>        are responsible.</p>

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*of the campus) to provide more downtown activity spaces for people to gather.*

*Mr. Knight said the project has the potential to be a tourist attraction and would be a better use for a structure that we all love and cherish. It adds to the City's inventory for cultural events. He showed a picture of the London National Gallery which reminded him of a big Pima County Court House only it had a lot of people in front and then compared it to a picture of the Pima County Court House with only one person in front of it. He said it's important to support the west side of the Interstate, but don't forget the core of downtown. Their plan establishes a counterpoint to the Tucson Origins Park, Science Center and History Museum projects on northeast corner of the entire Rio Nuevo district. It will reinvigorate downtown and provide a triangulation of pedestrian activity between the Rialto Theatre, the Fox Theatre, and the Tucson Museum of Art and by extension the Warehouse Arts District. They've structured the project as a public-private partnership between Pima County, the City of Tucson and TMA. He ended by saying a great city deserves a great art museum, and they want to be a museum that honors the past, celebrates the present and helps them create the future.*

*Chair Trasoff asked "where we go from here?"*

*Mr. Knight said the court house acquisition would require remodeling to bring it up to state-of-art museum facility. They have presented their project to the County (Chuck Huckelberry, Supervisoy Elias and others on at least moving forward on the north part of the building). There's lots of moving parts and they are trying to figure out a way to make it work. If they can't, they will have to expand on campus. However, Mr. Knight said they still would like to think that their proposal for revitalizing the El Presidio Plaza and creating that connection would be a fantastic addition to downtown. The biggest problem is parking. At one event they can have as many as of 600 to 800 people and they only have 40 parking spaces right now. El Presidio de Tucson has also been added to the neighborhood. They want to talk with Rio Nuevo to see if they can create parking that would help everyone.*

*Council Member Ibarra noted the organization has been downtown for years when nobody else wanted to invest down here. Now new groups are forming and picking up momentum. We need to do everything we can to reward those that have been here. He thinks it's a great idea!*

*Chair Trasoff asked TMA to meet with City staff and return to the subcommittee in October with a specific request. If TMA is ready in September, then they can come back sooner.*

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<p><i>Council Member Ibarra expressed some frustration. He said there's never a deadline with Rio Nuevo projects, and nothing ever becomes concrete. He agrees that the concept needs to be fleshed out a little more, but he hopes there's a deadline for when the City says this is what we are committed to. He hopes the City commits to helping them out.</i></p> <p><i>Mr. Knight added that they've been working on this project for a year and one half. They have a feasibility study. They have cost estimates. What they need to know is whether there was a community consensus to support the project.</i></p>	
<p><b>5. City's Request for Qualifications to Develop West Side Acreage</b></p> <p><b>Ann Vargas from Community Services presented. No action was taken.</b></p> <p><i>Ms. Vargas said they had a 90 days solicitation for request for qualifications for the remaining 14.3 acres on the west side on April 10<sup>th</sup>. Three responses were received. They were published in the newspaper and an informational memo went out to the Mayor and Council. One was from the Gadsen Company partners with Rio Development, one was a partnership with Williams and Dame and Peach Properties, and one was from TJ Bednar Company. All of them are for mixed use projects. They are being very careful about releasing proprietary information at the request of one of the proposers. There's a 7-member committee that is reviewing for the shortlist. As requested, neighborhood representatives are on the committee. Staff will return in August with a short list and proceed through November to be a little more specific.</i></p> <p><i>Chair Trasoff asked if they would come back with some concepts and be more specific on what they have in mind? Ms. Vargas, said, yes. After the short list has been established, they will ask to prepare something more site-based and then interviews will probably be conducted. Mayor and Council will be kept informed by an informational memorandum.</i></p>	
<p><b>6. Tucson Origins Heritage Park</b></p> <p><i>Chair Trasoff thanked staff for the invitation to visit the site before it was covered up. She said standing in the remains of a 4,000-year-old pit house and walking through a 2,500-year-old-pit house, and observing a 1,000-year-old skyline in the background was exciting.</i></p>	

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<p><b>Staff experienced technical difficulties with the equipment. Chair Trasoff decided to continue the Call to the Audience, while staff corrected the problem.</b></p>	
<p><b>2. Call to the Audience</b></p> <p><i>Anne-Marie Russell, Executive Director of the Tucson Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) announced that the museum received a \$100,000 grant for its work with local artists from the New York-based Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts Inc.</i></p> <p><i>Rick Luyties said the dialog between El Presidio and Town West is going well. They neighborhood scrutinized the plan and had a brainstorming session. Town West seems receptive to some of their ideas. They will continue to work with them over the next few months.</i></p> <p><i>Don Durband announced that the dialog between the Warehouse Arts Management Organization (WAMO) and Town West has also reopened. Raul Reyes met with the Executive Committee and had a very detailed meeting on how the project is evolving. WAMO expressed some of the same questions regarding affordable housing and incorporating the Art Walk. They also realize that there's a potential benefit to having 200+ hotel suites with local residents and shops on site that will bring people with money to spend. Mr. Reyes will be invited to speak at a future WAMO meeting.</i></p>	
<p><b>7. Tucson Origins Heritage Park</b></p> <p><b>Bill Doelle from Desert Archaeology gave an update on the archaeology work that has been going on at the site. No action was taken.</b></p> <p><i>Mr. Doelle said this is the second time they've worked at the base of A Mountain. A site map with Mission road, Mission Lane, and Brickyard lane on it orientated everyone. In 1953 the area became a landfill which resulted in the remains of Mission San Agustin Mission being demolished. . Before the archaeologists could get started they put up fencing and got rid of the asphalt. Heavy equipment has become the norm in modern and urban archaeology. A backhoe is used to scrape up the earth and then paint is used to mark the archaeological features as they are exposed.</i></p> <p><i>Mr. Doelle showed a preliminary map where the mission complex once stood and where the reconstruction is going to take place. The most common features found were 2,000-3,000 year old pit houses. A mini</i></p>	

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<p><i>reconstruction was performed by placing thin poles in the holes for the frame work and then placing brush and leaves on the exterior. These served as the domestic structures for Tucson for the past several thousand years. They found layers that went back 4,000 years. They found a cemetery associated with the mission to the north. In the 1940-50's as the brickyard moved outward it starting to cutting into the cemetery. There are about 20 burials still in the ground. They will remain there, and the area will be re-walled and it will be part of the Rio Nuevo reconstruction.</i></p> <p><i>On the south side, they found the village that Father Kino founded in 1690's. A cemetery, not as dense as the other one dating from the 1650-1700 time frame, was found. They also found a very well preserved early Native American historic period of pottery. They found a narrow 2ft across 12ft deep well in the Carrillo House. Some of the bricks were recovered and will be reincorporated into the reconstruction.</i></p> <p><i>At the Mission Gardens site they found a piece of the original wall. A lot of the east wall is still there and the foundations for a structure was there too. A map showed pre-historic irrigation canals that were used over 3,500 years of farming. A 1852 view drawing showed the chapel still standing, and the two story Convento. It shows two communities – one on the west side where the Indians/Mission community where and the Presidio/Civil community on the eastside.</i></p>	
<p><b>7. Future Agenda Items</b></p> <p>October 2007 – Tucson Museum of Art</p>	
<p><b>8. Adjournment</b></p> <p>Chair Trasoff adjourned the meeting at 6:17 p.m.</p>	